

etxerat

euskal errepresaliatu politikoen senide eta lagunak

familiares y allegados de represaliados políticos vascos

Parents et amis de prisonniers et réfugiés politiques basques

monthly report

m a r c h 2 0 1 3



march

The 20th of this month, with all eyes on Strasbourg, was heavily circled in our calendar. Unexpectedly and painfully yet another date came to prominence this March: on the 14th, Anjel Figeroa died without having being able to gain the freedom required by his suffering a serious neurological disease, paroled to his home since 2008. For the second time, the special prison policy had taken its toll in the family life of the Basque prisoner: for also on March 14 (in 1997), as she travelled to the prison to visit Alcala Meco, a traffic accident took the life of Antxoni Fernandez, Anjel's grandmother.

598

The 16 years between the death of Fernandez Antxoni of Anjel are the bloody reflection of our reality: neither the Basque political prisoners nor we, their family and friends, know any other reality than that of suffering the consequences of a special prison policy. Nor have we have known any other throughout the past 16 years; we have known no other in previous years, nor do we know

any other now that in a new situation in which, not without obstacles, the Basque Country is headed towards peace. While international experts asked Madrid and Paris for moves on prisons as a way of strengthening the peace process, both states persist in giving them the opposite: Xabier Lopez Pena has been in a Paris hospital since the 11th of this month, after a delicate medical procedure that did not go as planned. Despite the seriousness of his condition, until the 20th neither his lawyer nor his family knew he had been hospitalized or where he was.

A new traffic accident for Basque relatives of a prisoner, the second this year, has once again underlined the Russian roulette that hundreds of us face every weekend. The 1,800 kilometers that three families were forced to travel and the 1,300 journeyed by another, to return to the Basque Country without being able to have authorized visits, underline the fact that even the risk of continuous long journeys does not guarantee the right to communication with our relatives.

In Seville prison, Arkaitz Bellon was beaten up by officers. And in that same prison, as in others, isolation seeks to inflict psychological harm on Basque political prisoners.

March 20th was particularly marked in Inés del Río's calendar, in her lawyer's, in that of the rest of Basque political prisoners, in that their families and friends – indeed how could it be otherwise, in the Spanish state? The Grand Chamber of the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, on that date heard the appeal against the ruling in July by the European Court on Decree 197/2006 of the Spanish state. With this action, the Spanish state seeks the backing that will permit them to continue condemning the political prisoners to imprisonment without end and has already announced their preparedness to ignore the decision of the High Court, should it not agree with their interests. We, the family and friends, hope that one of the most flagrant violations of rights remains unlegitimized. And we will continue to fight, because human rights are inherent in the person. We cannot allow them to be granted or violated according to political interests that do not hide well their contempt for the peace process and their willingness to obstruct it.

Etxean nahi ditugu!

(Euskera for "We want them home!" -- Translator)

dispersed

598 basque political prisoners, through 81 prisons

- 438 Basque political prisoners dispersed through 45 prisons of spanish state
- 130 Basque prisoners dispersed through 32 prisons of french state
- 10 Basque prisoners dispersed through 3 prisons of the Basque Country
- 4 Basque prisoners in England
- 1 Basque prisoner in Northern Ireland
- 1 Basque prisoner in Scotland
- 1 Basque prisoner in Portugal
- 1 Basque prisoner on house arrest in Roma
- 10 Basque prisoners on parole due to serious and incurable illnesses
- 3 Basque prisoners in internal exile, one confined by French authorities to the northern Basque Country, another to Autun (France) and the other to Paris

- **86** prisoners in jails between **1.000 and 1.100 km** from Euskal Herria (the Basque Country)
- **159** prisoners in jails between **800 and 1.000 km** from Euskal Herria
- **135** prisoners in jails between **600 and 800 km** from Euskal Herria
- **100** prisoners in jails between **400 and 600 km** from Euskal Herria
- **88** prisoners in jails at least **400 km** from Euskal Herria
- **two** prisoners confined at least **900 km** from Euskal Herria
- **7** Basque prisoners jailed in another 5 countries.

right to health

On March 11th the doctors' association Jaiki Hadi reported on two sick prisoners, Ibon Fernandez and Ventura Tomé. The first was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, i.e. an incurable illness. In Tomé's case, he has a cancer of the prostate adenocarcinoma, currently labeled as of "intermediate grade".

The prisoner from Tafalla, **Ventura Tomé**, is in Murcia I jail, while tests are being carried out. Like all patients suffering from oncological diseases, he needs a

comprehensive and continuous monitoring of the progress of the disease to ensure its control and immediate intervention in the case of its worsening. He still lacks some reports from his doctors but it is clear that the disease has concerned both physicians and his relatives.

14

Prisoner **Ibon Fernandez Iradi** from Lasarte is in prison in Lan-nemezan and has recently been diagnosed with a degenerative disease. We are facing a serious and incurable disease that pro-

duces great physical and psychological deterioration in the person suffering from it. It severely limits patient autonomy either by progression of the disease itself or by the close monitoring necessary to give treatment in all necessary aspects. In view of the gravity of his situation doctors have decided that Iradi should be on the list of prisoners with serious and incurable diseases, which already brings the number to 14, all of which should be released due to their illnesses. Tomé is also likely to go on the list, but not for the moment. At least not until he has undergone operation and all relevant tests have been carried out.

But, in addition to the cases of Ibon Fernandez and Ventura Tomé, this month we also learned of the serious situation of **Xabier Lopez Peña**, and who has been hospitalized since March 11th. On that day Xabier Lopez Peña was transferred from the prison of Fleury-Merogis to the Corbeil-Essonnes Hospital, as he suffers cardiovascular problems. After some complications arose, on March 13th he was transferred to cardiology Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, where he underwent surgery the following day. His situation is complicated and over the coming months he will need specialised treatment and monitoring. The-

refore, his lawyers have called for the release on parole of Lopez Peña ⁽¹⁾.

We in Etxerat wish to strongly denounce the lack of communication by the hospital, the prison and the authorities in general towards relatives and lawyers of Lopez Peña. At no time were they notified of his situation. In addition to all this, it must be said that from March 11th, which was the day he entered hospital, until March 19th his family, friends and lawyers knew nothing of his situation and did not even know he had been admitted to a hospital.

Basque prisoner **Angel Figueroa** was found dead at his home on March 14. Figueroa had been paroled since 2008, which was when he left prison due to his serious and incurable disease. But one can't help thinking that whilst out of prison, he was still a prisoner, even though on parole -- and died a prisoner (he was confined to his home -- Translator).

⁽¹⁾*Tragically Xabier Lopez Peña died in a Paris hospital on March 30th; the circumstances are still not clear.*

special measures

unending sentence paroles

70

On the 20th March, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg began to examine the case presented by the Spanish state against the verdict of the Strasbourg Court in July of last year, in which it ordered the immediate freeing of Ines del Rio, judging Decree 197/2006 to have abused her human right to freedom.

Our relatives and our friends were in their day condemned by the courts. These sentences had a date at which they began and another on which they finished. Since 2006, Decree 197/2006 of the Spanish Supreme Court, which despite being contrary to legal principle is applied retroactively, subjects Basque political prisoners to imprisonment for life, to which they were not originally sentenced and to which therefore neither were we. Besides Inés del Rio, 91 other Basque Prisoners have had their sentences extended by up to 12 years. That is to say, Decree 197/2006 has been applied to 92 Basque political prisoners, which assumes imprisonment for life, and 70 of these 92 prisoners are still in prison. Decree 197/2006 thus becomes another mechanism of a prison policy intended to be an instrument of continuous revenge and inflicting ongoing suffering. From a prison policy that requires, for its purposes, carte blanche for the abuse of rights.

147

In the French state Jakes Esnal, Frederik Haranburu y Jon Kepa Parot are also sentenced to imprisonment for life (perpétuite). They are approaching 24 years of prison although five years ago they had met all the requirements for parole.

The systematic refusal of parole is another of the special measures taken against Basque political prisoners. Currently there are 147 in jail who, by legal standards, should have been given parole.

in the prisons

violation of rights other incidents

Isolation

Isolation or the separation of comrades and preventing all contact between them is another part of the discriminatory regime which is applied to Basque political prisoners. Although in legislation and in penitentiary norms, isolation is a measure applied to very concrete situations and also for restricted duration, it is applied to our relatives and friends as an ongoing regime, regardless of the sanctions which are envisaged as punishment measures. The Basque political prisoners are dispersed across different jails and also different buildings. In other cases and without this being a punishment measure as such, they are kept separate from the rest of their comrades, which one supposes must be a difficult loneliness.

Euskal Herria	Zaballa	Txus Martin
Spanish state	Soto del Real	Ibai Peña
	Córdoba	Sergio Polo
	Puerto III	Oscar Barreras
		Xabier Rey
French state	Joux la Ville	Marian Aramendi
	Tarascon	Julen Eizagirre
		Ibai Sueskun

Extreme situations

Sevilla Prison: On 23rd March the guards wished to search relatives and friends who were going on normal visits. As they were not going to have any contact with the prisoner, the visit being through glass, three relatives and friends refused to submit to searching and were not permitted to go ahead with the visit. In addition, on March 25th Basque political prisoners in Seville jail were holding a strike (refusal to leave their cell) in protest at the situation which Xabier Aramburu had to endure in Seysses Muret prison. Taking advantage of the situation, the officers entered the cell of prisoner of Arkaitz Bellon from Elorrio, to carry out a very heavy search. They wished to give him a very thorough body search but he was unwilling and refused. The officers reacted by giving him a tremendous beating and taking him to solitary.

In response to this situation the Basque political prisoners who are in Sevilla prison began a hunger strike to denounce the beating given by officers to Arkaitz Bellon, and to protest that they knew nothing of his condition. But the hunger strike was ended the following day because Arkaitz Bellon returned to his block and his comrades.

Muret Seysses Jail: On March 4th Aramburu had an argument with an official who then untruthfully claimed he had been threatened. Immediately he was taken to the "mitard" or punishment cell for 7 days. There he was ordered to strip, which he refused and was then forcibly stripped. He was also punched three times. Although he was the one assaulted, one of the officers claimed that Aramburu had grabbed and pushed him, throwing him to the ground, where he tried to hit him but did not succeed. For that, he has been sentenced to 23 days in the punishment cell.

They threw him in the punishment cell and gave him paper suit to wear, which did not last long, as it tore very easily. He was three hours with nothing until they brought him a small blanket. He was in that situation until Sunday: with a small blanket, no shower, no toilet paper and the toilet blocked, without his medication ...

When he got to the punishment cell he began a hunger and thirst strike. After five days, he began to take fluids. The doctor had not been notified about Aramburu's situation, although the latter had informed the principal in the block that

would go on hunger and thirst strike. On March 9th, he had a visit scheduled from a friend. They let him wear some clothes for the visit and guards brought him, handcuffed from behind. When the visit ended, he again had to remove his clothes.

On the 10th March they gave him his clothes, a biro and books. In addition they gave him a length of toilet paper and told him he would receive more the following day. Seeing that conditions had improved, Aranburu decided to end his hunger strike. Yesterday, Aranburu met with his lawyer and was also visited by the doctor. He was told he would be brought more things. When Julen Mujika (another Basque prisoner who had begun a hunger strike in sympathy -- Translator) heard about the improvements in Aranburu's conditions, he abandoned also his own hunger strike.

Puerto III jail: The prisoner Xabier Rey has been in isolation and alone (without any other Basque prisoners -- Trans) in the Puerto III jail since January, after having a scuffle with an officer. When Oskar Barreras (another Basque prisoner -- Translator) heard of this, he committed an offence so as to be sent to the same punishment block.

Barreras was brought to the isolation block but even so they were kept separately, without the possibility of communication. Nor could they communicate with Dani Pastor and Jose Mari Etxeberria "Goierri", although they had already been in another isolation block.

Faced with this situation, they planned a protest and refused to stand up during the head counts, although ordered to do so by the officers. They carried on this protest without a problem until March 10th. On that morning, the officer carrying out the headcount ordered Barreras to stand and, when he refused, called other guards. They all entered the cell, twisted his arm, grabbed him by the neck, hit him on the chest. They dragged him roughly to another cell, where they stripped him, insulted and threatened him. They allowed him to dress and then subjected him to Rule 72 (punishment -- Trans.).

It must be noted that the social prisoners on the block landing, when they heard the noise and Barreras screams, began a noise barrage and the following day began a hunger strike and refusal to leave their cells until they received more news of his condition.

Following these events Barreras has made a formal complaint to the prison court of Puerto III. The other political prisoners in the jail planned a protest for the 19th March.

Searches of prisoners

Relatives were searched before going into face-to-face visits in Puerto III but they also searched adolescents of 16 years of age.

In Jaén prison they also obliged relatives of a Basque political prisoner to strip; they were given a gown to wear but during the search the gown was lifted.

Accident as a result of dispersal

Two friends of Jabi Martinez, prisoner in the Jaen II jail, were in an accident on **March 24th** near Somosierra on their way back from visiting him. They were hit from behind by another car. Both friends are fine but because car was wrecked, they had to return by taxi to Usansolo.

Searches of relatives

Relatives were searched before going into face-to-face visits in **Puerto III** but they also searched adolescents of 16 years of age.

In **Jaén prison** they also obliged relatives of a Basque political prisoner to strip; they were given a gown to wear but during the search the gown was lifted.

Searches of relatives

In **Villena prison** there have been problems with visits because sometimes the security alert has sounded as they were preparing to go in and then before the visitors have been permitted to put their things in the box, the visit has been terminated. In some cases they have been forbidden future visits for a few months and in other cases, permanently.

Some visitors of Xabier Lopez Peña in **Fleury** jail were obliged to return home without having carried out the visit, which the authorities claimed had not been applied for, which of course it had.

Relatives and friends of Juan Carlos Estevez have had problems with visits in the **Muret Seysses** jail because they were refused visits on Saturdays and were obliged to have them during the week; some were unable to visit as a result.

In **Puerto III jail** they have removed the right to have face-to-face visits from the son of Xabier Garcia Gaztelu, giving the reason that he has reached 10 years of age, although until now they were allowed this until they reached 11 years of age.

In the **A Lama prison**, a relative of Luis Mariñelarena was refused a visit because his ID card was in need of renewal.

Studies

There have been problems with UNED (National Distance Learning University) examinations in Villena, as different exams were scheduled for the same day.

Zigor Orbe (now in Puerto I jail) has made a complaint to the Córdoba jail and to UNED, as he was prevented from sitting his exams and now they wish to charge him his study fee again.

Other events

On the 4th March, the mother of prisoner Xabier Alegria died and on the 6th March they brought him from Puerto III prison to her burial. The attitude of the Ertzaintza (Basque Autonomous Government Police – Trans.) there to his relatives and to him was very aggressive. But in addition to that, before beginning his return journey to Puerto III he was kept a few days in Zaballa prison. There he was kept in an observation cell, at all times under observation through a large glass pane in the wall. To the exercise yard he was brought accompanied by a prisoner who was required to be watched by 3 or 4 guards at all times.

Action day of Basque political prisoners in the jails

On the last Fridays of the month in all the jails in which the Basque political prisoners find themselves, they carry out an action day of which the theme is “Euskal Presoak Euskal Herrira” (“Basque prisoners to the Basque Country”). In most of the prisons they refuse the prison food but in some of them there are other actions: fasting, propaganda about Euskal Presoak Euskal Herrira ...

set free

Alex Uriarte (Gasteiz), 5th March – on conditional liberty, awaiting trial.

Juan Ramon Rojo (Irun), 8th March - with sentence served.

Mattin Olzomendi (Ziburu), 11th March – on conditional liberty.

Pello Olano (Lizartza), 11th March on bail of €15,000.

Joseba Vizan (Basauri), 19th March. In Brazil, on provisional liberty (awaiting decision on extradition - Trans).

Argi Perurena (Hendaia), 25th March – on conditional liberty, confined to Paris.

transferred

change of prison

Spanish state:

Olga Comes (Iruñea), from Soto del Real to Mansilla.

Iñaki Imaz (Donostia), from Soto del Real to Estremera.

Oier Goitia (Gernika), from Navalcarnero to Villena.

Juan Carlos Estevez (Donostia), from Muret Seysses to Soto del Real.

Ekaitz Agirre (Donostia), from Fresnes to Soto del Real.

temporary relocations

SPANISH STATE:

Zigor Bravo (Gasteiz), from Dueñas to Valdemoro.

Arkaitz Goikoetxea (Barakaldo), from Villena to Aranjuez.

FRENCH STATE:

Eider Uruburu (Bilbo), from Lyon Corbas to Fleury.

Ibon Goieaskoetxea (Gernika), from Villefranche-sur-Saône to Fleury.

Ander Mujika (Donostia), from La Santé to Bourg en Bresse.

Aitzol Iriondo (Donostia), from La Santé to Bois d'Arcy.

Oihan Barandalla (Iruñea), from Fleury to Nanterre.

Jurdan Martitegi (Durango), from Fleury to Nanterre.

Cristina Goirizelaia (Arrasate), from Spanish state to Bapaume.

Theme of the month

So how do we relatives advance towards an inclusive truth?

Nagore Lopez de Luzuriaga,
psychologist and member of Etxerat



“Behind every family member or friend who make up this large and diverse family that is Etxerat there is a story, a memory of a painful truth still hidden, denied or distorted .”

Share travel expenses, chats in the van or bus, the omelette you've prepared for the long journey. To wait for the last face-to-face visit and then to return to the Basque Country, sharing rage after being denied to embrace him again because they insisted on frisking, knowing 16 who never returned alive from the trip and not knowing for certain if you will. Not being able to travel 750 km there and the same back again because your age and the over twenty years you've been on the road have undermined your health, adjust the month's budget to buy the train ticket, living waiting for the phone call or to receive unpleasant visits when you're on holidays or at a checkpoint.

Living in a tense silence and eternally on the

alert for news on the radio about arrests in France, having to give up life expectations and plans when with the theft of the release date of your brother they have taken yours also. Worrying about the police escort which will bring him to the hospital appointment, unable to sleep thinking about how worried he left you during the last telephone conversation so that you could barely follow the conversation, knowing the possibility that they will torture your daughter when they take her at three in the morning after pointing guns at the whole family, imagining what will become of his life in an unfamiliar place that you imagine far away after so long.

Trying to explain to your daughter why they won't allow her to stay longer with her father or why she has to leave her teddy bear at the

Reception desk, or the day you ended up without a visit because you forgot the family book⁽²⁾. Living with the fear of not seeing him back home alive after so many years, looking at the photo knowing that the bullets that took his life were not a fluke, imagining how she'll be doing after more than two weeks on hunger strike, preparing the package for next week, or trying to control the car when some people who identify themselves as law enforcement officers have tried to push you violently off the road

I believe that each of these families with whom I have had the good fortune to share miles, talks and food out of tupperware containers over the years in a prison policy that has forced me and many others to travel thousands of kilometers, are great survivors of the vagaries of life. People full of dignity, resistant to harsh experiences and realities, with their own resources and many helpings of solidarity, love and even humor, face and move onwards, overcoming all sorts of difficulties and exceptional measures. Victims of

“In the creation of our own model the relatives of the prisoners must also contribute and express opinions, because if we aim it to be an inclusive model, all of us must speak”.

an unjust special policy that never cease to demand that it be ended once and for all. I can only be proud to belong to this group that I hope with all possible speed each one of us can leave ... That does not mean forgetting but instead a path to the construction of truth.

The fact is that for people who make up the association of which I am part, that which is called – not by all – the "Basque conflict", has not gone unnoticed in any of the cases and has had many and varied consequences in our lives: ordeals, complexes, and in many cases, a difficulty in sharing, of even daring to comment.

Behind every family member or friend who make up this large and diverse family that is Etxerat there is a story, a memory of a painful truth still hidden, denied or distorted by too important politicians and media in this country who are given too great an importance and who, if they should mention it, in many cases it is to legitimize it publicly for political interests, without any consequences, of course. A reality upon which Etxerat has been making people aware for too many years now, complaints of violation of our rights and those of our relatives that have that have now become like a well-worn coat. Denunciation and work, illuminated by all this solidarity that luckily we still find in family and friends in the form of smiles, hugs, volunteer drivers, people mobilized to protest, friends lending a listening ear, trying to help out financially ... In short, a people that does not forget and fights

² A document given by the Spanish Ministry of Justice upon marriage, into which are entered births, adoptions, deaths, divorce, separation; this document is usually demanded for face-to-face visits, i.e. without being through glass, before allowing children to visit – Translator.

for the prisoners.

Recently we had an opportunity to participate in the Social Forum to boost the peace process; this took place at locations in Pamplona and in Bilbo. The event, which brought together many different social actors and stakeholders, helped us to hear recognized international experts on paths taken and formulas used in other parts of the world, lessons learned, what worked and what did not. It's a good way to reflect on the way we're doing here at home, about what we need, what we should put in place and, of course,

"The term 'victims' will be understood to mean people who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that violate criminal law in force in the Member States, including those laws proscribing criminal abuse of power."

which ones to disable urgently.

It is important to know other experiences, but we must find the appropriate model for the context. And in the creation of our own model the relatives of the prisoners must also contribute and express opinions, because if we aim it to be an inclusive model, all of us must speak. Because that inclusive truth to

which we aspire cannot exist without including the relatives of the prisoners, with our memory, the blood-stained reality, the state violence that we suffer. The Forum discussed issues important to our people, for its people, for its history ... Key issues to move towards overcoming the conflict and its consequences, and toward a more democratic and just society, in which both our rights and those of our relatives are respected. In Etxerat we hope for that.

In February the National Assembly (of Etxerat) made a first approach on these issues when we said that to move forward in that sense it seemed essential to make progress on what is called the Transitional Justice, which is but the instrument of transition that brings people from a scenario of violence and denial of rights to a just and lasting peace with guarantees of non-repetition.

To do this, an essential step is to recognition. The recognition, by the civil population as well as by the leaders and institutions, that there have been among our nation and continue to exist today, many people who have suffered and are suffering in this long conflict. Without establishing any pain rating and comparisons, the first step is simply to acknowledge the suffering that has been experienced and which continues to be. This is a concept which in other parts of the world has been called "moral equalization of suffering" to deal with different situations and types of victims.

Being aware that the concept of victim is controversial and with some reservations due to



concerns about the partisan use made of it, it is worth clarifying the meaning of the term and its importance in the context of conflict and serious violations of rights. The "Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power", in its 21 articles adopted by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 40/34 of 29 November 1985 states that: "the term 'victims' will be understood to mean people who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical or

"A Truth Commission is an extrajudicial mechanism created by the state or the ruling class during the transition to build a new narrative of what happened in the past, a new social contract so you can overcome and allow society to move towards a democratic experience."

mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that violate criminal law in force in the Member States, including those laws proscribing criminal abuse of power."

In our case, in that of relatives of the prisoners, we know suffering at first hand; we are the victims of legislation, of a state action and of a special penitentiary policy which is directed at our relatives and at ourselves. We are victims of the exile and deportation of our relatives and also victims, in some cases, as relatives of those who have been deprived of life, or losing that too on the roads. Victims, as people, of a conflict in which we have had and continue to have our rights and those of our families violated. Neither with the motivation of victimization nor to promote the identification of the victim, but as a way to assert our rights. This designation of victim seeks to steer away from stigma and positions of passivity and is intended as a form of active resistance. It is an exercise of civil and political rights in order to prevent impunity and amnesia, recognizing and acknowledging not only in suffering, but also and especially in our manifestation as social actors and so possessors of rights, seeking for justice, the injuries caused are repaired and the non-recurrence of violations guaranteed.

Recognition and knowledge are therefore critical steps to advance truth and memory, a memory and an inclusive complete truth, which is the sum of various truths. They are necessary steps that justice may be made possible, reparation and coexistence.



“ And with regard to compensation of victims, the response that society can give to a situation of repression is that of justice, as well as a way to relieve suffering and to recognize the rights of victims. It involves the following: restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.”

The construction of truth and memory retrieval requires the clarification of the facts: What happened? Why? It is an account of the recent history of the country, which is credible and which relies on a public truth, whose reconstruction should be the first work of jus-

tice. To accomplish this, a Truth Commission has been created in other conflicts around the world, which is an extrajudicial mechanism created by the state or the ruling class during the transition to build a new narrative of what happened in the past, a new social contract so you can overcome and allow society to move towards a democratic experience. It could certainly be an interesting mechanism to advance on the path to truth for our people too.

Regarding the concept of justice, it is the prosecution of past unpunished crimes which society is trying to achieve. And with regard to compensation of victims, the response that society can give to a situation of repression is that of justice, as well as a way to relieve suffering and to recognize the rights of victims. It involves the following: restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.

It is in this sense that we said in the Assembly and in the search and the demand for recognition and knowledge, Etxerat will participate in initiatives around peace, memory and coexistence which may arise as Etxerat believes that if the organisation does not do so, no one else will do it for us.

Obviously, we still have a long way to go, a long way for everyone to chart, from the way back home for all our relatives, to building a more just society in which there will be no reason to end up in prison or in exile. Relatives and friends of political prisoners have much to contribute to the memory and truth of this people, without doubt. In solidarity and cohesion ... let's do this!

Etxerat

March 1st: The organisation organised a press conference in Bilbao to present the bertso³ performance "Et-xean nahi ditugu" ("We need them home") which was held on March 17th at Jai Alai handball court in Gernika. Bertsolaris Fredi Paia and Onintza Enbeita, who later performed, took part in the press conference and contributed to it.



4th March: Ziortza Fernandez Larrazabal and Idoia Iragorri Petuya took part in the solidarity week organised annually by Euskal Herriaren Lagunak (Friends of the Basque Country) and Askapena⁴.

4th – 8th March: Prisoner's relative Jone Artola represented Etxerat in the delegation that went to **Brussels**. Also in that delegation were lawyer Irune Agirre, Emelie Martin and Beñat Zarrabeitia of Herrira⁵.

9th March: Etxerat and Herrira carried out a press conference during which they evaluated the contacts made by their delegation to Brussels.





March 12th: Etxerat reported on the health status of prisoners Ibon Fernandez Iradi Tome and Ventura, in a press conference. Their relatives also explained how they have witnessed the emergence and development of the illnesses and also gave an update on how the prisoners are right now. Furthermore, we denounced the conditions in which Xabi Aranburu had to live in Seysses Muret prison and a friend who had visited him recently related how the state in which he had found him.

March 14th: Etxerat attended the Social Forum organised by Lokarri in order to push the peace process further.



17th March: 600 people met at the handball court in Gernika to enjoy bertso performance "Etxean nahi ditugu" organised by Etxerat.





19th March: On the day preceding that which the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg was to hear the appeal of the Spanish state against its decision in the Ines de Rio case, Etixerat organised a press conference with participation by relatives of prisoners who have had the Decree 197/2006 applied to them, in order to present our position on it and to make it clear that human rights would be at stake on the 20th.

21st March: The organisers of the popular Lasterbidean race (two courses on foot, one of 8km and the other of 4km) and representatives of Etixerat held a press conference for the race which has been organised for 2nd June, in Oiartzun. They also presented their web page www.lasterbidean.com and the song composed by Siroka, in collaboration with Eñaut Eloorrieta, of the music band Ken 7 with lyrics by Jon Martin.



³ The "bertso" is a rhyming song following a set pattern, very popular in the Basque Country, where competitions are held between bertsolaris who have to compose on-the-spot musical dialogue between themselves or about given topics – Translator

⁴ Basque anti-imperialist movement organisation concerning itself specifically with international solidarity – Translator.

⁵ Campaigning organisation for the prisoners.